

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 14 and 15 have been amended and new claims 28 and 29 have been added. Accordingly, claims 13-29 are pending in the present application.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowance of claims 22-27, and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14 and 15. In response, claims 14 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, indication of allowance of claims 14 and 15 is respectfully requested.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,365,209 to Ito et al. Claims 16 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. Claims 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,506,241 to Makimoto et al. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,986,521 to Tada et al. (Tada '521). Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,177,852 to Tada et al. (Tada '852). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Among the limitations of independent claim 13 which are neither disclosed nor suggested in the prior art of record is a composite dielectric filter device which includes “an outer-conductor-free portion formed at a part of the outer conductor corresponding to a boundary between the at least two mutually adjacent filters” and “an input/output terminal shared by the at least two mutually adjacent filters”.

Neither Ito et al., Makimoto et al., Tada '521 nor Tada '852, either alone or combined, teach or suggest the claimed arrangement of the outer-conductor-free portion between two adjacent filters and the shared input/output terminal.

The Office Action contends on page 2 that the resonators 1 and 2 of Ito et al. are individual filters. This, however, is not correct. As recognized by Ito et al., two dielectric resonators are used to form one dielectric filter. See column 4, lines 17-20 and the equivalent circuit diagram of Fig. 5 described at column 5, lines 18-27. Therefore, Ito et al. teaches that a single resonator can not be considered to be a filter. As such, the dielectric filter disclosed in Ito et al. has the outer-conductor-free portion located between adjacent resonators, not between mutually adjacent filters as required by independent claim 13. There is simply no teaching or suggestion in Ito et al. to locate the outer-conductor-free portion between adjacent filters.

In addition, the filter of Ito et al. has one input terminal coupled to one resonator and one output terminal coupled to the other resonator. Thus, the structure of Ito et al. neither discloses nor suggests "an input/output terminal shared by the mutually adjacent filters" as required by independent claim 13.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 13 patentably distinguishes over Ito et al. for at least the above reasons.

Makimoto et al., Tada '521 and Tada '852 do not remedy any of the deficiencies of Ito et al. None of these references, either alone or combined, teach or suggest "an outer-conductor-free portion formed at a part of the outer conductor corresponding to a boundary between the at least two mutually adjacent filters" as required by independent claim 13.

Therefore, even if one were to combine the teachings of Ito et al., Makimoto et al, Tada '521 and Tada '852, one would not arrive at the present invention as defined in independent claim 13. At best, one would arrive at a dielectric filter which includes an outer-conductor-free portion between adjacent resonators of an individual filter, but not an outer-conductor-free portion located between mutually adjacent filters as defined in independent claim 13. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 13 patentably distinguishes over the art of record.

Claims 16-21 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 13 and include all of the limitations found therein. Each of these dependent claims include additional limitations which, in combination with the limitations of the claims from which they depend, are neither disclosed nor suggested in the prior art of record. Accordingly, claims 16-21 are likewise patentable.

New claims 28 and 29 have been added to more fully cover the scope of the present invention. Each of claims 28 and 29 depend directly from independent claim 13 and are allowable over the art of record for at least the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 13. Accordingly, favorable consideration and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants had submitted an Information Disclosure Statement on September 30, 2003, in the above-identified application. To date, Applicants have not received an initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08A form from the Examiner indicating that the references cited have been considered and made of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the references cited in the September 30, 2003 Information Disclosure Statement and return an initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08A form with the next communication on this application. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the September 30, 2003 PTO/SB/08A form is enclosed herewith.

In view of the forgoing, favorable consideration of the amendments to claims 14 and 15, favorable consideration of new claims 28 and 29, and allowance of the application with claims 13-29 is respectfully and earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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